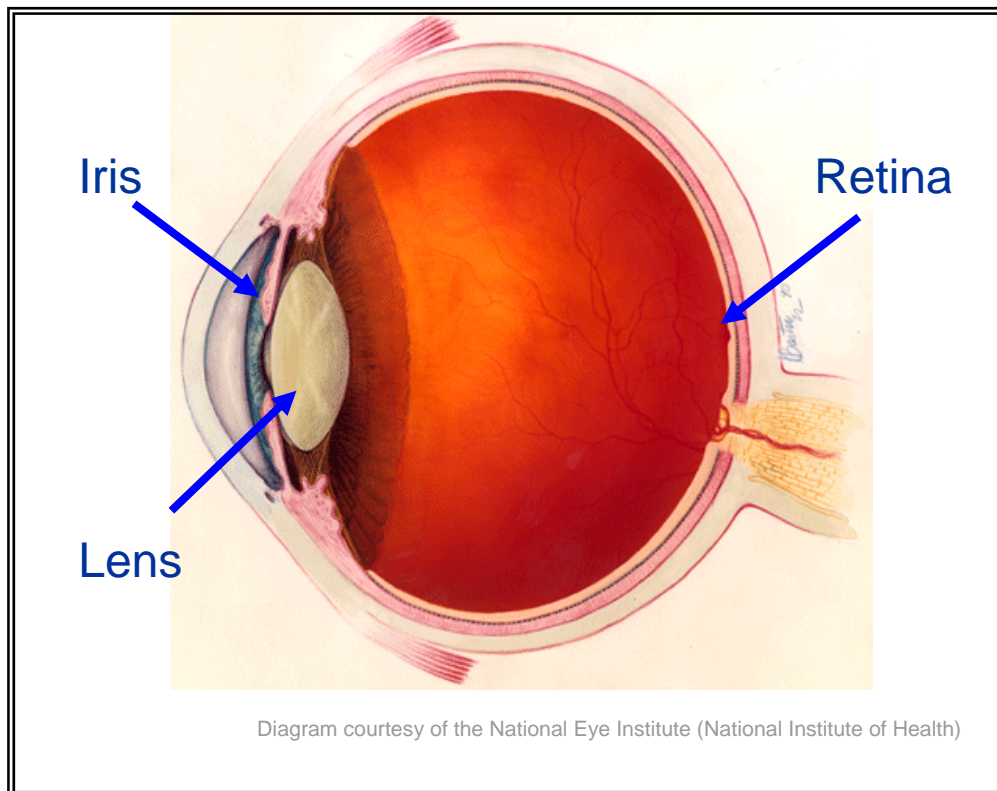


Congenital Cataracts

What is a congenital cataract?

A congenital cataract is an **opacity** (cloudiness) in the **lens** of the eye that is present at or shortly after birth. For a child to be able to see, light has to pass through the lens (which is normally transparent); children with cataracts may have vision problems due to the cloudiness of the lens.

The lens is located behind the **iris** (the colored part of the eye). Normally, when light passes through the lens, the light is focused on the **retina** (the rear portion of the eye) to create the “picture” that we see.



How are congenital cataracts treated?

Small or mild congenital cataracts may not require any correction or treatment, since they do not interfere with vision. However, larger cataracts that disrupt a person's vision may need to be surgically removed. Your child's doctor(s) will discuss appropriate treatment options with you.

What causes congenital cataracts?

There are several possible causes for congenital cataracts, including viral infections the baby has before birth, metabolic conditions, and genetic conditions. However, for most patients, no specific cause for the cataract(s) can be found.

For more information

MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/ency/article/001615.htm>

The National Eye Institute – www.nei.nih.gov

Source: MedlinePlus Medical Encyclopedia